

Chapter XVIII

FINALLY——

MY readers will have discovered by this time that teaching is not an easy thing (7). But they may also have concluded that it must be easier to walk with some light upon the path—light that will always grow clearer—than to fumble in the dark, stumbling and taking wrong turnings, buying experience at a very high price, and possibly doing harm where one meant to do good.

Do any of us older folk like to think of our own first pupils? Do we ever wonder what became of them, musically? Do we not, even when communing with ourselves, change the subject?

That the young teacher will make mistakes at the beginning of her career, even with the best theory at her back, is inevitable. For teaching is an art, and every art is learnt through making mistakes. But her mistakes will not be as bad as those we made long ago, and she will at once detect them, because she will know something of the science on which the theory is founded. She will know where she was wrong, and why. All that is to the good.

Of the hundreds of students in our music schools, by far the greater number will have to live by teaching. They do not fully realize that; or, if they do, they do not see the necessity of any preparation beyond knowledge of music and instrumental skill. Teachers who have been in harness for some time know that this is a fallacy,

and that they would have been saved both time and worry (10) had they been taught to teach what they knew.

Those who contemplate teaching as a career are perhaps discouraged by the prospect of teaching beginners. They have so often heard it called 'drudgery.' But take courage, young people. Many who used to call it drudgery now find it of such absorbing interest that they are eager to take beginners and do the foundation-work themselves. It is only unskilled work that is drudgery; skilled work of any kind never is. This work of yours needs knowledge and skill of a kind over and above that knowledge and skill which you already possess, and with the skill will come pride in your work and satisfaction and pleasure. You may have to begin with a small connection, or in a small school; but never mind. It is your little allotment, and if you make it productive you will have a larger garden to cultivate by and by. People have been discovering that even a little allotment needs much care and patience and wisdom. But wisdom is to be had for the asking, and Rudyard Kipling reminds us that—

'Half a proper gardener's work is done upon his knees.'

Teaching is not an easy thing, and it is a very responsible thing. Like matrimony, 'not to be enterprised or taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God.' The music teacher is apt to think that her responsibility towards her pupil ends with the music lessons. Who thinks so is wrong; for no human soul can

come in contact with another human soul for even half an hour a week without leaving on it some mark for good or ill. Influence works both ways, and probably we get as much from the children as they do from us, but with us lies the responsibility.

It is hardly necessary to say that every good lesson in any school subject is a factor in that building up of character which is the ultimate aim of all education; but you must also have an intelligent faith in the special educative value of your own subject. You must be convinced that music can give your pupils something that no other subject gives; a kind of thinking-material which differs from all others, and which is necessary to their full development as human beings.* If you believe that, you will feel sure that the work you are engaged in is highly important work, and you will know that in choosing to be teachers of music—though it may have been a blind choice to begin with—you have not chosen amiss.

* See Appendix II.

Appendix I

MUSIC IN THE CONCRETE

(Appeared in *Child Life*, April, 1899.)

THE historian who, in future years, will write the history of the schools of our era will undoubtedly choose as his headline these words: 'The era of pedagogical catch-words.'* So writes an American educationist, and his saying is true. That it should be true is inevitable. In the much talking about education, words and phrases are dropped about, and many pick them up who fancy they have found a principle when they have only found the name, the mere shell, of a principle. If people stopped short at using these words, small harm would be done, even though they did not inquire very deeply into their meaning. But, unfortunately, those who seize them are persons who are honestly interested in teaching, and wishful to do what in them lies to help on the great work of education. If such a person misapplies what Mr. Klemm calls an 'educational catchword,' or even takes hold of one principle—however good and true—and proceeds to build a system upon it without taking into consideration other and compensating principles, positive harm may ensue; or, at best, the negative harm of unnecessary waste of time.

There is no department of education in which this happens more frequently than that which concerns *Child Life*. The very word 'kindergarten' is misused to an extent which sorely tries the patience of the Froebelian, and any device for keeping a child quiet and out of mischief is styled a 'kindergarten toy.' 'Teaching in the concrete,' 'self-activity,' 'hand and eye,' 'constructiveness,' and 'games,' are catchwords responsible for the sale of that large part of the stock of the average kindergarten depot which has no educational value. The main defect of this material is that it is over-elaborated; it attempts too much. That which is supposed to arouse self-activity rather checks it, because no

* 'Chips from a Teacher's Workshop,' Klemm, page 128.

room is left for experiment; the bribe to constructiveness falls flat because so much has been already constructed; and the 'games' are too often devices for helping children to *memorize* a quantity of undigested—and indigestible—information.

It is about 'Teaching in the Concrete' that I wish to speak of more particularly, because I think that it is a misunderstanding of that principle *as applied to music* which has inspired so many persons with the idea of teaching musical theory by means of apparatus of various kinds. During the past ten years I have come across quite a number of these devices, which, though they differ slightly in detail, have their main features in common. The prevailing ideas seem to be these:—

1. That it is desirable to divorce theory from practice.

[The quotations are from advertisements of different kinds of apparatus, but the italics are mine.]

(a) 'That children may learn the rudiments of music *before attempting any musical instrument or singing.*'

(b) 'That a child may learn the notes, sharps, and flats *without being near the piano.*'

(c) 'It would be a saving to a good instrument if children were made perfectly familiar with this game *before allowing them to touch the keyboard.*'

It is singular that teachers who have sufficiently observed modern teaching to adopt its catchwords and form systems upon them should not have noticed one remarkable change, namely, that nowadays we try to teach the theory of most subjects *through* the practice and not *before* the practice. Therefore, to put a child through a complete course of musical theory before he begins to play or sing is to keep our music teaching on a lower platform than the teaching of any other subject. Theory and practice should advance side by side, bit by bit. Each new effect (whether of pitch or rhythm) should be *first* observed by the ear—that is, differentiated from other musical effects—then named, and then expressed by a symbol. This is the psychological order of the music lesson. Then comes the practice—the testing whether that symbol constantly and inevitably calls up in

PSYCHOLOGY APPLIED TO MUSIC TEACHING

the mind the effect (whether of pitch or duration) for which it is chosen as a means of expression. Hence the practice-material for every mental step must be very carefully prepared. But practice-material there must be; and the final testing should not end in ever-so-rapidly naming symbols or in making arithmetical calculations with symbols, but in doing something which the symbol tells him to do when he meets it in a bit of real music.

2. That something which appeals strongly to hand and eye can impress a musical fact on the mind, i.e. that 'music in the concrete' is tangible and visible.

(a) A full-sized keyboard (description does not say whether of wood or cardboard) on the plan of a dissected map, for the child to take to pieces and put together again. Various games are played with this apparatus.

(b) Cards, cubes, and dominoes with musical characters 'distinctly marked' upon them.

(c) Movable *giant* notes (metal) to hang on a wire staff.

(d) The same arrangement in wood.

(e) 'A music stave *of large size* on a varnished board.' Notes and other characters to use with this, 'made of thick cardboard, not easily broken, *and coloured so as to be attractive to the children's eyes.*'

(f) 'A model note,' consisting of all the parts of a note separated, for the child to build up for himself, by adding one piece at a time to the semibreve.

(g) Pricking or stitching the forms of various musical symbols.

(h) Sewing coloured beads, representing the scale-sounds, upon a cardboard staff.

(i) 'The *actual handling* of a wire staff, metal notes, time and key signatures *on a large scale*, not only makes learning the elements of music a pleasant game, but impresses the facts thus learnt more firmly on the mind.'

(j) 'He is interested by means of games and *objective material.*'

(k) The giant note method. This is a tutor, not an apparatus; but the same idea prevails.

This is where the idea of 'teaching in the concrete' comes

in. Something we can see and handle? No, but something we can *hear*. The first kindergarten music—rote-singing—is truly music in the concrete. Tunes stored up in the memory are the concrete wholes, to be afterwards broken up into their elements of pitch and rhythm when conscious and directed observation begins. This conscious observation, again, is not done by seeing and handling, but by listening. Not first the staff, ever so big or ever so solid, and then its explanation in ever so pretty a ‘game’; but first the fact of pitch, discovered by observing that in real tunes the sounds go up and down, and then the thought, ‘How can we best make a picture of those high and low sounds and their relation to each other, so that we may write and read them?’

3. That the same kind of apparatus which is used effectively in teaching number will serve to teach time.

(a) A large cube divisible into thirty-two smaller cubes to illustrate the relative value of notes.

(b) Paper for cutting up, ‘the semibreve occupying the largest piece of paper, the next being divided into two, then four, eight, sixteen, thirty-two. By cutting these pieces up the children learn to understand the value and duration of the different notes.’

(c) ‘The representation of the number of beats a note is worth by a corresponding number of beads drawn along a string.’

(d) ‘Coloured reeds, cut in lengths, for *time visualization*. The smallest reed represents the note of shortest duration in a piece, and others are proportionate in length.’

Here is the same mistake in the teaching of *time* and rhythm. To compare the sign $\bigcirc$ with the sign $\bullet$, and say one is worth four of the other, is no more music than comparing two with eight, symbol with symbol, is arithmetic. But to *listen*, and to notice that in real tunes some sounds last during four pulses and some for only one, and then to fix upon a symbol for each of these facts—this is examining *music* in the concrete, and using notation as a means of expression. And, to make this teaching effective, the symbol need not be larger than in any well engraved music, except for class teaching, nor more solid than chalk upon a blackboard; for

PSYCHOLOGY APPLIED TO MUSIC TEACHING

it is not to the *symbol* that we would specially direct the attention, but to the *sound*. Cutting up paper or drawing beads along a string are admirable plans for teaching arithmetic, but so little arithmetic is needed for the realization of rhythm that it is hardly worth while to provide an apparatus for it. In spite of all tradition to the contrary, it is possible to teach a child music for the first three or four years without requiring him to realize mentally any group higher than six.

4. That music can be 'constructed' like a geometrical design.

(a) The various notes 'can be arranged in over a hundred different figures or designs, . . . forming an endless source of amusement and instruction.'

(b) 'They can be arranged in every possible combination on the model stave by the teacher *or by the pupil*.'

(c) 'Pupils can learn to compose.'

Arranging notes on a staff in 'figures and design' is not constructing music. We compose music in our heads, and our materials are sounds. We can teach a child to construct time-plans, and a very good exercise it is for his inventive powers; but rhythm is only one element of musical composition, and the only one that we can use as an exercise in self-expression in any sort of ordered teaching. The child who goes to an instrument and picks out by ear a tune, remembered or invented, *is* exercising self-activity, and this should always be encouraged; but to try to make it a part of any ordered teaching would be a mistake. To make a good melody is no easy matter, if I may judge from the efforts of young teachers in trying to write their own illustrations. 'Constructed' melodies are likely to show the seams too plainly; and I believe that the melodies that have lived were never constructed at all, but sent down from Heaven ready-made. They have been sent to little children now and then.

Musical form, nevertheless, is a necessary part of intelligent elementary teaching—taught, not by construction, but by observation. The child need not try to compose tunes, but he ought to be taught to observe how others have

composed them; and here again the necessity for real music asserts itself. In his first little tunes (limited though they must be to the material *he* can understand) he can be taught to notice the elements of musical form, the imitations of rhythm, the shape of a melodic phrase. Bit by bit, as his knowledge grows, come fresh examples in the experience afforded by his practice-material, and this habit of observation is not only necessary for intelligent playing, but the best preparation for self-expression if, in later years, the pupil should have anything to express.

5. That it is a desideratum that the pupil should know without knowing that he knows.

(a) '*Before they are aware of it* the children find themselves over the first difficult steps of their musical education.'

(b) '*The pupils, almost without knowing it, acquire a familiarity with the elements of music.*'

(c) '*Without really knowing it, they have imbibed those foundation principles of music, which may be called its mechanism. . . . These children have passed unconsciously through the drudgery of music, etc.*'

It is true, in a sense, that we all know many things without knowing that we know them, but such knowledge is practically dead knowledge to us. It is 'below the statical threshold,' and might as well not be. To 'find oneself over the first difficult steps of musical education' (which in these instances means to have gone through a complete course of musical theory understandingly) 'without being aware of it' is a psychological impossibility. This 'awareness,' which it is so desirable to avoid lest it should interfere with the pupil's pleasure, is really the only thing that can prove that he knows anything, the one thing that causes the process of knowing to be a pleasure, that creates the interest necessary to further knowing, that gives the kindergarten child the idea that 'lessons' are pleasant things.

6. That a kindergarten game is played with teaching apparatus, and that kindergarten children have to be kept in a continual state of amusement.

(a) '*Conveying instruction in an easy and pleasant manner.*'

PSYCHOLOGY APPLIED TO MUSIC TEACHING

(b) 'The whole game forms a complete course of musical instruction in an entertaining manner.'

(c) 'Play and work combined, and therefore a true kindergarten method.'

The notion of the educational game 'combining amusement and instruction' is not new. Some of us can recall the quartet games of our childhood, which were supposed to give us much knowledge about authors and their books, painters and their pictures, countries and their products. We played them, and some of us who were priggish tried to think we liked them; our parents thought them 'so improving,' but none of *us* were deluded into thinking that we learnt anything from them. Now, some of these things are at least harmless. For instance, I should not object to giving a child a set of 'musical cubes,' because I know that he would at once set to work to educate himself by building a house with them, paying no attention whatever to the crotchets and quavers printed thereon, except to wish they weren't there, because his house would look so much more like a real house if his bricks were quite plain. But the *tendency* of all such devices is in the direction of cram. They are mostly attempts either to boil down a quantity of information into a concentrated essence, no whit less wholesome, or to drag into child life a class of knowledge which does not belong to it. To take an extreme case—again from a catalogue—there is an apparently popular game which gives 'on twelve cards a brief but complete [!] History of England, from the Invasion of the Romans to the present day, besides the chief events of French, German, and Ancient History.' Here is 'An ox in a tea-cup' and no mistake! It may be a game, but it is certainly no joke.

The tendency of the musical apparatus is not so much to over-condense as to over-elaborate. Material and games are provided for teaching advanced musical theory, difficult time divisions, major, minor, and augmented intervals, chords, and their inversions. This is not child knowledge, and by the time the child is ready for it, the apparatus and the game are unnecessary. The kindergarten game is a different thing altogether, and has a different purpose.

7. It will easily be seen that all these devices—some of them very clever and ingenious, and most of them pretty to look at—are an attempt to adapt to the teaching of *music* the plans which answer so admirably in the teaching of *number* and *form*. But why such an attempt should be a mistake may not be so apparent, seeing that music clothes itself in outward and visible symbols, and that arithmetic seems to be a necessary part of it, even to the extent of the possible division into sixty-four parts. The reason is this: that, while the elements of form and number are visible and tangible, the elements of music—pitch and rhythm—cannot be seen or handled. For *music in the concrete is sound, and nothing but music can teach music*. Musical symbols and their names may be memorized, as arithmetical or geometrical symbols and their names used to be memorized under the old teaching. But, if they are to mean anything, the facts which they symbolize must first have a place in the mind in some concrete form; and, while in the case of form and number these concrete facts enter the mind through the senses of touch and sight, in the case of music they enter through the sense of hearing. The conditions therefore are quite different.

I do not unreservedly condemn all apparatus. *It is always allowable when it shows something that cannot be shown in any other way*. Charts are handy and time-saving, and colours in connection with the scale have been found helpful; but the less apparatus we use in music teaching the better, and the amount necessary is very small. Musical thinking has to be done with sounds, not things.

I know that many of these plans have been devised by zealous teachers, earnestly anxious to brighten and simplify the work of their little pupils, and willing to take endless trouble in securing that end. I can well understand that the adoption of kindergarten methods would suggest itself as the best solution of the difficulty, and that hard upon this suggestion would follow the associated ideas of 'games,' 'occupations,' and 'teaching in the concrete.' But there is no doubt that in the hands of a mechanical music teacher all apparatus is dangerous and harmful and I cannot help

PSYCHOLOGY APPLIED TO MUSIC TEACHING

thinking that those who have any real teaching power would find that they could do better work without it.

ANNIE J. CURWEN.

[The above was written in 1899. It did some good in this country, and also in America, where it was copied into an influential kindergarten magazine. In fact, during those twenty years 'apparatus' methods have almost died out in this country. But now we have Dr. Maria Montessori providing 'material' for music teaching which has many of the same features as those mentioned above. See her *Advanced Method*, Vol. II, pp. 313-14 (Bell-keyboard), 319 (Staff and discs), 351 Chart with moveable notes. Dr. Montessori's Method is just so far better than those others that the children have always something to listen to as well as to see and handle. In fact, she and her assistant, Miss Maccheroni, are so near the light that if they would only discard the apparatus altogether and use the real keyboard and a blackboard they would see tolerably clearly how to teach music. In the teaching of rhythm they do better, approaching somewhat to Jacques-Dalcroze.

These ladies, like the inventors of those other apparatus methods, are not musicians, but well-meaning experimenters, wishful to help education. Musicians don't do that sort of thing — A. J. C.]

Appendix II

SHOULD ALL CHILDREN BE TAUGHT MUSIC, OR ONLY THE GIFTED?

(Appeared in *Child Life*, October, 1899.)

WRITING to me *à propos* of the helpfulness of the time-names in the realization of rhythm, a German friend says: 'I think we Germans take a different view of music, and would be inclined to say that, if a child cannot grasp the time-divisions without all that artificial help, he had better leave music alone.'

As nine-tenths of our own musical profession would say the same thing, this attitude (on the part of the profession, at least) is not distinctively German. But the fact remains that custom, with regard to musical education, differs very much in the two countries. The German parent allows music lessons only to those of his family who show early aptitude; while the English parent decides that to practise the piano shall be part of every child's daily task; and, having so decided, he opens his purse, shuts his ears, and hopes that something may come of it. It may be worth while to consider why this is so—which of the two customs is the more nearly right; on which side the educationist would feel inclined to range himself.

We must not give either nation credit for having arrived at its mode of procedure in pursuit of an educational, or even an artistic, ideal. How they drifted there is not difficult to see. In England there has been more money than in Germany; also more snobbery. In the days before class singing was dreamt of as a school subject, 'music' meant performance on the piano or the harp. It ranked as an 'accomplishment,' an 'extra,' and this was enough to establish it firmly in the boarding schools. For 'accomplishments' meant gentility, and for what was a girl sent to boarding school if not for that? Germany was poorer, and

PSYCHOLOGY APPLIED TO MUSIC TEACHING

I am inclined to think that it was economy rather than reverence for art which prompted the German parent to select for the luxury of music lessons the child who seemed most likely to make some return for the money spent. It is hard to kill tradition, and parents continue to do as their parents did, except that we now extend the music lessons to the boys.

If performance be the sole aim and object of the music lessons, the German parent is undoubtedly right; but in this 'if' lies the *crux* of the whole matter. There is no doubt that in England much time and money are lost in the endeavour to teach some young people to play the piano. On the other hand, there is such a thing as late development, and I have known German women who were not without musical ability, but had been denied instruction because a sister had earlier shown signs of aptitude; and when, later on, a keen love of music awoke in these unfavoured ones, and with the love a desire to do, it was too late to hope for any technical facility. Surely this, too, is a loss, and leaves something to be said for the love of fair play which makes John Bull unwilling to deprive one child of the opportunities he gives to another, something for the love that hopeth all things and would give them all a chance. This blind instinct (for it is blind in most cases) is nearer to a right educational principle than the premature specialization of the German. A recent French writer* strongly condemns parents for thus 'predestinating' their children. He says: 'Les droits qu'ils ont sur leurs enfants ne vont pas jusque-là. La raison en est évidente. On ne sait pas d'avance à quoi l'enfant sera propre; c'est précisément l'éducation, si elle est bien conçue, qui nous l'apprendra, ou tout au moins nous donnera des indications.' Yes; education, *si elle est bien conçue*. If we would arrive at a true answer to the question: 'Should all children be taught music?' we must first seek for a true *conception* of musical education and its aims, and not be surprised if the search should lead to an overthrow of traditional practice, English and German alike.

* M. Paul Lacombe, 'Esquisse d'un Enseignement basé sur la Psychologie de l'Enfant.'

What, then should be the aim of musical education, *bien conçue*? Is it dexterous performance, vocal or instrumental? Certainly not, except in special cases; and yet, paradoxical as it may sound, artistic performance is more likely to be the outcome of that kind of education which does not make it its chief aim, than of the kind which does. In saying this I speak of the average pupil, not of the gifted few. All education at first must be general, not special. We must first aim at general musical intelligence, and later at special executive skill. But the intelligence should from the beginning be developed by doing, experimenting, first with simple, and afterwards with more complex material. We can do much to educate the mind through the fingers. M. Lacombe says again: 'Puisque donner des connaissances à l'enfant est moins utile qu'exercer son esprit, nous choisirons les connaissances à lui donner, moins pour les connaissances en elles-mêmes que pour leur pouvoir d'exercer l'esprit. Et nous les offrirons toujours par le côté qui exercera le mieux l'esprit.' So we would offer the child musical knowledge, not for the sake of the entertainment with which he may one day repay us, but because musical knowledge, rightly presented, will exercise his mind in a different direction and upon a different kind of material from any other knowledge. This being so, we are not warranted in withholding it from any child. Every child has a claim, a *right*, to be developed, so far as he is capable of development, on every side of him.

'But,' says somebody, 'suppose he has absolutely no ear, does not hear any difference between one sound and another?' All the more reason for trying to awaken a slumbering sense. Suppose your child has one feeble limb, an arm without muscle, a hand that cannot grasp. Do you adopt a do-nothing policy because it is unlikely that the child will ever become a gymnast? No; you put the limb under treatment; you watch every little bit of betterment with interest; you are not discouraged if the progress is slow, or even if you know that it will never be fully developed or perfectly under control. And so we should treat the feeble ear. If at first the child cannot hear the difference between a high and a

PSYCHOLOGY APPLIED TO MUSIC TEACHING

low sound, he should be encouraged to listen till he can. Children of this kind are, fortunately, rare, as rare as those who suffer from infantile paralysis. When we do find them, we must treat them as we do the paralytic, and work in love and hope. It sometimes happens that the ear which is deaf to pitch-sounds is quite awake to rhythm. If so, let us begin there. The music of savage nations consists mainly, in some cases entirely, of rhythm. On the 'culture epochs' theory, this rhythmic, pitch-deaf child is only where he should be (!), which, considering his rarity, might cast a doubt upon the theory, but would not lessen his claim to be brought 'up to pitch.'

This preliminary training is best done in the singing class. Whether every child should have it or not has been decided (for the primary schools) by Government, and the turn of the secondary schools is coming; we need hardly stay to argue the point.

But with instrumental music parents will always have a free hand, and it is in this department that so much time and money are wasted. Yet I would decidedly say that *all* children should learn the piano up to about fourteen years of age, and then, when the pressure of other subjects becomes greater, selection should be made of those who should continue. Up to a certain point, melody provides sufficient material upon which to exercise the child's powers of observation, but soon he wants something more. 'Making music' on an instrument, instead of with his own voice, awakens a new kind of interest, and calls new powers into play; and pianoforte music offers a larger field for observation. The pupil finds a wider range of pitch, a fuller development of rhythm. He can notice how chords are derived from scales, arpeggios from chords, 'passages' formed by ingenious combinations of the three; how parts respond to each other, melody answering melody, rhythm responding to rhythm. From the very beginning of the pupil's pianoforte work his attention should be directed to the elements of musical form. He needs it for the right interpretation of his simplest tunes; he needs it if he is to be an intelligent listener to the higher forms of music; it will help him to

memorize his pieces, for he will find, if accustomed to analyze, that passages which look difficult and sound imposing are reducible to very simple elements.

Train the child's *ear*. Apply all that he learns in the singing class to his pianoforte work, that he may feel music to be a unity. Let him discover, as he may if rightly guided, that (in the words of a great educator) 'music in itself is easy; it is the grammarians that have made it difficult.' Develop the technical side, that all may be easily *done*, as well as easily understood. Let it all be practical. Little paper work. No 'theory' apart from the piano. Everything illustrated, everything *heard*. Give this kind of musical education up to fourteen years of age, and the time and money spent on it will not be lost. Even if the practice of music be dropped, the critical faculty will have been awakened, and will probably grow of itself as the general intelligence develops, feeding itself upon the music it hears. The aims of musical education, *bien conçue*, I take to be these:—

(a) To aid in the general development of the human being, so that every sense may contribute to the whole soul-content.

(b) To create intelligent *listeners*, for whom the artist, the gifted one, may work.

(c) To find the talent which shall be worth cultivating to a higher degree; the material from which to make the fine executant; and—more precious still—the wise teacher, who will help to create and hand on a better tradition.

Admit these principles, and not only must we recognize the claim of *every* child to be musically educated up to a certain stage, but we shall see the advisability of a process of selection after that stage has been reached; seeing that music is only a part of general culture, and that natural ability may be making loud calls in quite another direction. Thus we find a course, which seems to me to be the true one, between reckless generalization and premature specialization. More than that. Admit these principles, and we shall see that the *kind* of musical education required is something different from that which has prevailed either in England

PSYCHOLOGY APPLIED TO MUSIC TEACHING

or, so far as I am able to ascertain, in any other country.

This brings to mind another tradition which it is about time to wipe out. It is the belief that only in Germany is there any musical education worth the name. This was true once upon a time, but nobody who knows anything about it could say that it is so to-day. 'England,' writes my German friend, 'needs another twenty years of musical education before the teaching will be efficient.' Most true! And when she has had it, Germany will need another twenty in which to catch her up.* For during the past half-century England has been making strides, while Germany has been living on her reputation. There is an enormously greater number of children taught in England; consequently, there is a greater number of teachers; consequently, there may be a greater number of *bad* teachers; but whether there is a higher *percentage* of bad teachers is another matter. The fact is that in both countries the teaching is excellent in the higher grades, and there is no need for the advanced student to leave London in search of good lessons, though there are other advantages in studying abroad.† It is in the elementary teaching—the higher work from the educationists's point of view—that our methods are so faulty, and I cannot ascertain that they are better elsewhere. I have seen quite as unintelligent teaching done by the German governess as by the English one, and the standard of playing among amateurs is not higher in Germany than in England. This is the outcome of the average teaching, and more nearly concerns the ordinary English parent than the special training of *virtuosi*.

But though it may be a sort of consolation to feel that we are 'no worse than our neighbours,' it does not absolve us from the duty of being as much better as we can be. It is not so much that we want 'more thoroughness'; though we are always being told so. There never was a time when teachers of all grades were more anxious to do

* Is not this prophecy fulfilled to-day (1920)?

† We can now say emphatically that the high grade pianoforte teaching is better here.

thorough work; and, besides, if you happen to be on wrong lines, the more thorough you are the more mischief you may do. We want to examine our aims and ideals; to apply to music some of the principles which are revolutionizing other teaching; to study the child and his needs, and leave the *virtuoso* to Providence.

ANNIE J. CURWEN.